

Earl Blumenauer strongly believes that our government has a special legal and moral obligation to Native Americans of this country given their uniquely sovereign status. This obligation is defined by treaties and statutes, and interpreted by the courts.

Sadly, the history of the United States brings no great credit to the government or Congress as an institution, and there have been many lost opportunities. The trust relationship requires the Federal Government to exercise the highest degree of care with tribal and Indian lands and resources.

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### **Blumenauer Speaks Before the National Congress of American Indians**

## **Preserving Tribal Rights**

Congressman Blumenauer has been a leader in Congress to preserve the sovereign authority of Native American tribal governments. He supports the Sovereign Protection Initiative and other efforts to halt and reverse the erosion of tribal sovereignty. He successfully fought to secure funding for tribal transportation infrastructure in keeping with the National Congress of American Indians' recommendations.

During the 107th Congress, independence of Native Americans was repeatedly threatened. These attacks came through the guise of tax codes, the federal tribal recognition process, and, in some cases, through proposals to actually remove lands from reservations. The proposals would have rolled back many of the Native Americans' hard-earned accomplishments. These

efforts reflected a very basic misunderstanding of the fact that Native American tribal governments are now and will continue to be sovereign nations.

### **Protecting Tribal Land and Treaty-Reserved Rights**

Congressman Blumenauer has worked to protect Native American tribal lands from damage and development, and preserve traditional access to gathering grounds for First Foods and sacred ceremonies. HR 5025, the Mt. Hood Stewardship Legacy Act, supported the ability of Native Americans to continue gathering first foods in the Mt. Hood National Forest by establishing Priority Use Areas outside of current and proposed wilderness areas. It also encouraged members of Indian tribes with treaty-reserved gathering rights to work with the Forest Service to identify and manage the areas for the gathering of first foods, including roots, berries and plants that are gathered for traditional and cultural purposes.

### **A Friend in Indian Country**

Congressman Blumenauer takes every opportunity to learn more about the concerns of tribal and urban Indian leaders. He hosts annual roundtables in Oregon with tribal leaders and has attended drumming and fire ceremonies at urban Indian alcohol and drug programs. During Congressional recesses, he has toured the Columbia River Gorge with Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission law enforcement officers to investigate threats to cultural sites.

Additionally, he is pressing for increased access to services for urban Indians, including supporting the reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, and joining efforts to elevate the position of Director of the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services to Assistant Secretary for Indian Health.

Congressman Blumenauer supports Tribal development of renewable energy resources and is a leading proponent of tax parity for biomass as part of the Renewable Production Tax Credit program. While biomass is a resource that Tribes are starting to pursue, it only receives half of the tax credit that other renewable resources are afforded.